

Message Text

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ACTION DOE-15

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PASS DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY DEPUTY SECRETARY O'LEARY

E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TECH, ENRG, IT
SUBJ: US SPEAKER AT GENOA SOLAR ENERGY EXHIBITION-CONFERENCE
JUNE 15-18, 1978

REF: STATE 91297

1. I AM DELIGHTED TO LEARN THAT YOU HAVE ACCEPTED THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT'S INVITATION TO SPEAK ON JUNE 15 AT THE OPENING OF THE GENOA SOLAR ENERGY EXHIBITION. I VERY MUCH APPRECIATE YOUR AGREEING TO TAKE THE TIME TO DO THIS BECAUSE I BELIEVE IT WILL MAKE AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO OUR RELATIONS WITH ITALY.

2. THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS GIVEN CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO THIS EXHIBITION AND, MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, TO DEVELOPING THE COMMERCIAL POSSIBILITIES OF SOLAR ENERGY. THE FIRST SOLAR-THERMAL-ELECTRIC POWER PLANT CONNECTED TO A GRID IS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN OPERATIONS IN 1981 IN ITALY, SEVERAL ITALIAN FIRMS ARE BEGINNING TO MARKET SOLAR HOT WATER HEATERS, AND THERE IS WIDESPREAD INTEREST HERE IN PHOTOVOLTAICS. IN ADDITION TO THE POTENTIAL

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OF THE MARKET WITHIN ITALY ITSELF, ITALIAN COMPANIES AND THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD LIKE TO PLAY A ROLE IN THE EXPORT OF SOLAR TECHNOLOGIES TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

3. APART FROM THE INTERESTS OF THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT, I VIEW YOUR VISIT AS A USEFUL OPPORTUNITY FOR US TO MAINTAIN AND BROADEN OUR DIALOGUE WITH THE ITALIANS

ON ENERGY ISSUES. AS YOU KNOW, THE ITALIANS HAVE BEEN A SOMEWHAT RELUCTANT PARTICIPANT IN THE IEA EXERCISE AND HAVE WONDERED WHETHER THE COSTS HAVE OUTWEIGHED THE BENEFITS TO ITALY. FROM THE OUTSET THEY HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR HEAVY DEPENDENCE (MORE THAN ANY OTHER WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRY) ON OIL IMPORTS, MOST OF WHICH COMES FROM ARAB COUNTRIES. ITALIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN MANY RESPECTS IS CONDITIONED BY THIS HEAVY DEPENDENCE ON IMPORTED ARAB OIL IN A MANNER THAT OCCASIONALLY LEADS TO CONFLICTS WITH OUR OWN INTERESTS. INTERNALLY, THE HUGE OIL IMPORT BILL ADVERSELY AFFECTS ITALY'S ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SITUATION. THEREFORE, WE ARE INTERESTED IN HELPING TO FIND WAYS TO REDUCE ITS ENERGY DEPENDENCE.

4. ON THE BILATERAL SIDE, WHICH OBVIOUSLY COMPLEMENTS OUR MULTILATERAL EFFORTS, AFTER SOME FALSE STARTS WE ARE NOW EMBARKING ON A NEW PHASE OF THE WORK OF THE BILATERAL ENERGY WORKING GROUP. IN PARTICULAR, WE ARE MOVING TOWARD A COOPERATIVE PROGRAM IN AREAS OF NON-NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY. THESE EFFORTS ARE BEING TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COMMITMENT UNDERTAKEN BY PRESIDENT CARTER AND PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI LAST JULY TO "ENHANCE AND REINVIGORATE" OUR COOPERATION IN ENERGY.

5. ALL OF THESE GOALS CAN BE FURTHERED, I BELIEVE, BY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE GENOA EXHIBITION AND BY A ONE OR TWO-DAY VISIT TO ROME EITHER IMMEDIATELY BEFORE OR AFTER GENOA. SUCH A VISIT WOULD NOT ONLY EMPHASIZE OUR INTEREST IN ITALY, ITALIAN ENERGY PROBLEMS AND DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES, BUT ALSO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO GIVE THE ITALIANS A FIRST-HAND ASSESSMENT OF THE DOMESTIC AND WORLD ENERGY SITUATION, EXPLAIN US ENERGY POLICIES AND PROJECTS, AND DISCUSS THE NEXT STEPS FOR OUR BILATERAL COOPERATION. GARDNER

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